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Editor's Comments

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EDITOR'S COMMENTS

FILLING *MISQE* WITH QUALITY ARTICLES

The current issue of *MISQ Executive*—like the prior two issues—has been published late. The delay results from an insufficient pipeline of papers ready for publication. While the number of quality submissions is gradually increasing, we remain at risk of being late for another issue or two. We thank you for your patience as we grow out of our lengthy start-up phase. Our first few years of publication have convinced us that there is interest on the part of academics in doing research for practice and on the part of practitioners to learn from that research. But few universities offer incentives for publishing in practitioner-focused journals. Those researchers who have published in journals like *MISQE* find the rewards are related to the potential impact on practice, a satisfying outcome that is nonetheless quite different from tenure or promotion.

Our intention, as a journal, is to publish four articles per issue, each based on rigorous research and offering valuable insights for CIOs. Admittedly, these two metrics: “based on rigorous research” and “offering valuable insights for CIOs,” are subjective. However, we are constantly honing a review process—and feedback loop—that we believe brings us close to delivering the quality research we hope to contribute to this field. In this letter, I will describe the process of developing, reviewing, and enhancing *MISQE* articles. I invite all our readers to share their reactions to these processes and the content of the journal. Ultimately, the goal of *MISQE* is improved IT management practice, and we solicit your views as to how well we are doing on this goal.

MISQ Executive has adopted a different review process from the purely academic IT journals. We wanted to ensure that the top practice-oriented researchers were willing to participate in the review process, because we believed their participation in the development of the content of the journal was critical to its success. We also wanted to ensure authors that research on current issues would be published in a timely manner. To that end, we involve one senior editor and, in almost all cases, two members of our editorial review board (the list of editorial board members is listed on the inside

cover of the print edition and on our website) in each review. The two editorial board members read the submission and send brief notes to the senior editor as to the strengths and weaknesses of the manuscript. The SE then conducts a conference call with the two reviewers to discuss whether the article should be accepted and what changes are necessary to make it valuable to *MISQE* readers. This process has proved engaging and educational for the reviewers, and it usually provides faster feedback for authors. It results in a single letter to the authors from the SE explaining the review decision and, where appropriate, detailing specific changes the reviewers deemed necessary.

In most cases, the editorial board members are not involved in the revision process, but senior editors have called on reviewers, on occasion, to provide input on revised manuscripts. Although both the senior editors and the editorial review board members work extensively with practitioners, we have benefited from the additional input of Ray Hoving, acting as SIM's representative, who reads almost all accepted manuscripts and provides a practitioner's perspective on how to enhance their value. Once accepted, manuscripts are sent to Barbara McNurlin, who edits every article for improved readability and conformance with *MISQE*'s style.

To learn which articles are meeting readers' needs and help shape the review process, our publisher, Alan Dennis, tracks online readership of articles to identify the articles that attract the most interest. Cynthia Beath, one of our senior editors, has conducted a biannual feedback process with our editorial board members to identify the best articles published in *MISQE*. We are also working with SIM to develop a feedback form citing the articles that SIM members find most valuable. And Jack Rockart, our former Editor in Chief, is initiating a Readers Forum of CIO readers, who will provide comments on articles to encourage discussion of the issues raised in *MISQE* articles. Through these efforts we hope to consistently improve the quality of the articles we publish and to encourage research that targets the problems CIOs currently face.

The four articles in the current issue of *MISQE* have all benefited from our editorial process. They cover a range of topics and research methods. In the

first paper, Sid Huff, Michael Maher, and Malcolm Munro review the level of Board involvement in IT decisions in eight Canadian financial services firms and nine Canadian primary resource firms. Based on interviews of both board members and CIOs, the authors report a remarkable lack of Board involvement in issues ranging from CIO hiring to risk assessment. The CIOs in the seventeen firms all believed Board members were less involved than they should be. The authors offer six suggestions for getting a Board more involved in strategic IT decisions.

Claudia Loebbecke and Jonathan Palmer tell the story of a successful RFID pilot implementation at a European retail firm and one of its key fashion merchandisers. The researchers followed the 5-month implementation from the perspective of both firms and noted the benefits and challenges of implementation. They highlight the potential value RFID can deliver to both retail and manufacturing firms, but they note that competitive advantage from RFID demands some of the same practices and developments that have created value from more traditional technologies: process adjustments, technology standardization, coordinated software components, conversion of data into usable information, and mutual trust between parties sharing RFID data.

Jerry Luftman teams with Rajkumar Nempaiah and Elby Nash to present the results from the latest SIM survey of key issues for IT executives. The 2005 survey yielded 105 responses which differ just a little from the 2004 survey. The authors share respondents' views of the most important management and technology issues facing CIOs. They also explore the challenge of business-IT alignment. Considered to be the most critical issue facing CIOs for the last three years, Luftman et. al. identify enablers and inhibitors to alignment.

Finally Phil Zwieg, Kate Kaiser, Cynthia Beath and eighteen other researchers—by far, the largest set of authors on an *MISQ* article—present findings from a SIM study on IT workforce trends and implications. In this article, the team shares 5 key findings from 81 IT executive interviews. They start a discussion on the implications of these findings that should provide a basis for future debates among both practitioners and academics. The Luftman-Nempaiah-Nash article found IT workforce issues to be among the top three issues facing IT executives. The Zwieg et. al. article starts to deliver the kind of facts that can help executives shape their IT staffs and sourcing strategies going forward. It also identifies the challenges facing academics who are preparing the next generation of IT professionals. The article notes the importance of practitioners and

academics working together to ensure that needed skills are available in the years ahead.

As a set, these articles demonstrate the range of research that can inform practice. Please let us know what does—and does not—support your efforts.

Jeanne W. Ross

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